PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin each unit by writing a passage in response to a prompt. This writing sample can be used as the placement test as well as the pretest. You score the samples with a rubric (provided for each form of writing) that considers the following elements: organization, content, style, and mechanics.

A perfect score is 100 points. If your students score 20-95 points, they have the necessary pre-skills to participate in the unit.

Guidelines for placement:
- 0-19 points: The student may not function well at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level they will require accommodation and assistance.
- 20-95 points: The student is properly placed and will benefit from instruction at the level tested.
- 96-100 points: The student may have skills exceeding those taught at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level they can still benefit from participation in this level of the program. Additional challenges can be added by making adjustments on the rubric for what is required of this student. For example, if the rubric requires students to use four forms of figurative language, the higher performing students can be required to use five forms of figurative language.

After students have completed the placement test and you know they're appropriately placed, you are ready to begin the lessons.

GETTING READY TO START

> Note: The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the advanced level of Descriptive Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.
>
> Each student will need lined paper and a folder to use as a writing folder in which to keep writing assignments.

Introducing Descriptive Writing

We're going to work together as you learn to be authors in many different forms of writing. Sometimes authors work with others to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing is called a collaborative writing project. The people who work together enjoy sharing their ideas.

Sometimes we will work as a cooperative group to write a class piece of writing. When we do a collaborative piece of writing, I'll write our ideas and the piece of writing on chart paper or type it on the Smart Board. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class piece of writing. (Note: Writing can be word processed using a computer and a Smart Board.)

Sometimes authors work alone. After we work cooperatively, you'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next several lessons, you'll be learning about descriptive writing. Descriptive writing uses words and sentences to paint clear pictures in the reader's mind. You will be writing passages with multiple paragraphs.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

Administering the Pretest

> PREPARATION: Display the following writing prompt on the board or on a Smart Board: Write a multi-paragraph passage of three hundred to five hundred words that describes a specific person you know who has made a positive difference in your life. Write about the physical appearance and the personality of that person using descriptive words and examples.

(Explain to the students that before they start the Descriptive Writing unit, you would like to collect a sample of their writing. Mention that you will save this sample so you and they can see how their writing develops as they learn more about writing descriptive passages.

Read aloud the prompt to the students. Then, ask them to write a descriptive passage on lined paper. Allow them sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the passage. Use the rubric and scoring guide found on the following page to evaluate each student's writing. Staple the rubric to each student's piece of writing. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.)

Scoring the Pretest

(For each element:
Give a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
Give a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.
Give a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.
Give a score of 4 for each element at the proficient level based on the state curriculum or Common Core State Standards.
Give a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Total the scores for each individual element. Place students according to the guidelines for placement found on page 10.)

Name _____   Date _____

RUBRIC   ☐ **Pretest**   ☐ **Posttest**

Scoring the Sample

Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.
Give the student a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.
Give the student a score of 4 for each element at proficient level.
Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Descriptive Writing	
The author of this piece of descriptive writing about a person…	**Points Earned**
Organization	
Uses an opening paragraph that clearly introduces the topic.	
Develops related sentences in middle paragraphs.	
Uses transition words and sentences to move the reader from one paragraph to the next.	
Follows a logical sequence and order.	
Uses a concluding paragraph to bring closure to the passage.	
Content	
Uses descriptive details that involve at least three senses.	
Uses descriptive details for physical appearance.	
Uses descriptive details for personality traits.	
Describes personality traits through the actions of a subject.	
Gives a personal response to the subject.	
Style	
Uses specific nouns and verbs.	
Uses at least fifteen adjectives to modify nouns.	
Uses at least ten adverbs to modify verbs	
Uses figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration)	
Uses a variety of sentence beginnings.	
Mechanics	
Indents paragraphs.	
Capitalizes proper nouns and the first word in sentences.	
Uses appropriate end punctuation.	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Employs standard English usage.	
Total Points	